

M E R C A T O R:

O R,

Commerce Retrieved,

B E I N G

CONSIDERATIONS on the State of the *British Trade*, &c.

From Saturday, May 8. to Tuesday, May 11. 1714.

*Several Inferences drawn from the last Discourses.**What is become of the Prohibitions in France, if such Quantities of our Goods are sent thither?**What is become of the Quantities of Manufactures in France?**And what of the Goodness of them also?**If neither of these are the Case, then the French must be all Fools and Mad-men.**The main Inference is, That then all our Schemes and Accounts of the French Trade, drawn from the Custom-house Books, are false, not able to give any true Account of the French Trade.**This enlarged on.**Farther referred to the next Mercator.*

THE Inference from the last *MERCATOR* is very plain, (viz.) that a very large Quantity of English Woollen-Manufactures are at this time sent to Marseilles in France, notwithstanding the high Duties.

What is become of the Prohibition that our wise Opposers talk of? It is true the high Duties payable upon our Goods in France are such, that in any Goods but ours it would be a Prohibition. But let it be a Prohibition or what you please; we see the Goods do go, and the French Merchants take care to have them; how they manage themselves as to the high Duties, that is nothing to us.

But if the French take off such Quantities of our Goods now, what may then be supposed they would take, if the Treaty was made Effectual, and those high Duties all taken off, as far back as the Tariff of 1664?

It is the oddest Jest in the World, that these Men print every Day, that our Goods are prohibited in France, and that the French cannot take them, and yet every Day we enter large Quantities of Woollen-Manufactures for France. They say they are prohibited, and yet we see they take them: They tell us the French will not take them, and yet we see they do take them: This is opposing Words against Things, setting Arguments against Demonstrations. Such Logick our Preservers of Commerce, as they pretend to be called, use with us, and such Assurance they are furnished with, the like of which has not indeed been ordinarily known in the Ages since Reason and Christianity were received in these Parts of the World.

Having thus proved that great Quantities of Goods are sent into France notwithstanding the high Duties laid on them there, and notwithstanding the Prohibitions so much spoken of, what must then become of those mighty Manufactures in France which they have Improved so much, as to be as good as ours, and increased so much as that they want none of ours? This is a Trade that must be bewitched some how or other, or else these Men are bewitched that talk thus.

What, make as good Goods as ours are, and pay no Taxes upon them, and yet be contented to buy English, and pay 70 or 80 per Cent. Duty upon them! What, make so many Goods of their own, that they not only supply themselves, but are able to fill the foreign Markets Abroad too, and supply all the World, beat us out, and bid fair to Engross all the Trade of Europe, and yet all this while be so eager to buy our Goods as; that rather than not have them they will Import them in the Face of a Prohibition, and pay 70 or 80 per Cent. Duty for them.

If all these Things are true, it must follow, which indeed are undeniable Truths,

1. That the French really have not Woollen Manufactures of their own Growth, and of their own Workmanship, to supply their own Occasions. Or,

2. That the Woollen Manufactures which the French do make in their own Country are not at all equal to the English either in Goodness or in Price.

Or



Or if neither of these are the Case, then the French are Fools and Madmen, and act against all the Rules of Commerce, or indeed of humane Prudence in the World; and if they do it is very strange, for we do not find they act so in other things.

When we talk so much of the French Manufactures being as good as ours, What think you the French say of it? Truly they laugh at it as they may well do; it is true they do not make their Jestings at it so publick as we do; but the *MERCATOR* thinks it may not be improper to give here the Words of an eminent French Merchant who came lately hither from France, and who being perfectly Unprejudiced in the Cause, after hearing a warm Discourse of some Citizens upon this Subject, when he heard one of them insisting afterward how good the Woollen-Manufactures of France were, he smiled. What do you smile at, said one of the Company? Smile, said he, is it not enough to make a French Man smile to hear you English Men tell us our Manufactures are better than yours? It would be very well for France, said he, if it were true: But, says he, the Woollen-Manufactures of France are to yours in England, as your Brandy in England is to ours in France, viz. that no Body will drink it if they can get French. Would not you English Men laugh, continued he, if you should hear a French Man affirm, That your English Brandy was as good as ours, no more are our French Manufactures as good as yours.

These Things are so necessary to be known, that they can hardly be too often repeated. But to return to the Point.

That which is principally to be inferr'd from all this, is this, (viz.) That it appears now, that all the Accounts pretended to be given of the Trade to France from England, whether on one Side or on the other, are Imperfect and Unsatisfying, and cannot be true in any respect.

Upon this single Thing turns the whole Weight of all they have been saying from the beginning of this Dispute. The Writers on the other Side have given Schemes, stated Accounts, drawn Ballances, and formed Disputes upon those Accounts and Ballances. But as an Error in the first Concoction cannot be rectified in the second, so taking away the Credit of those Accounts takes away the Foundation upon which all the Arguments drawn from thence are depending.

To what purpose do they draw Conclusions from wrong Premises? They demand the Accounts of the Custom-house, and we prove those Accounts imperfect and false, and capable of giving no true Estimate of the Trade. What Guess-work then must here have been made? And how have the poor People been Imposed upon to believe what others say, who they have esteem'd Honest Men?



All the Schemes, Draughts, Calculations and Accounts, whether such as have been laid before the Parliament, and the Board of Trade, or published by Pamphlets and Books, whether publickly ordered, or privately procured from the Custom-house, or from Accounts kept in Offices under the Commissioners of the Customs; what have they been but Amusements, appearances without any foundation, and from which no true Scheme of the Trade can be drawn?

It is apparent, great Quantities of Goods are daily sent for France by such Methods, and Entred under such Heads as the Custom-house can take no cognizance of, and by which means they are never seen in their Accounts as Entred for France.

If these Men who decry the French Trade so much are not afraid of their Cause, let them obtain from the Parliament an Order to the Custom-house to Impower the Commissioners to oblige the Merchants to Enter their Goods for the particular Ports to which they are shipp'd; and that if Goods are Entred to one Port and shipp'd for another, the Endorsement of the Cocket may be Entred in a Book, that they may know whither the Goods are sent. Let them admit no general Entries to Nations, but to Ports in Spain, Germany, Flanders, the Streights. What are they? What Account can be drawn from them? They are no Ports, but Countries full of Ports; and while these are allowed to be given at the Custom-house as Heads of Entries, Great-Britain can make no Judgment, no Estimate of her Trade to any part of the World.

We know very well, and our Enemies cannot contend it, that under all these General Heads English Goods are shipp'd to France; but if the Quantity cannot be known, what then signifies an Account from the Custom-house, other than to Delude and Deceive us, and to make that pass for a full Account of our Export which is but a part, and that, as the *MERCATOR* sees good Reason to believe, is not a half part by a great deal.

The Opposers of these things know very well that this is so; and while they thought that no Notice was taken of the Fraud, they made loud Boasts of their Schemes and Accounts from the Custom-house. Nor did the *MERCATOR* indeed see so far into the Fraud at first, as now upon farther Examination he does. Upon this Examination, nothing can appear more fallacious, nor can any greater demonstration be desired of a flagrant Cheat, and an inimitable Stock of brazen Assurance, than the publishers of these Schemes and Custom-house Accounts have shewn in this thing, as shall be farther shewn in our next *MERCATOR*.

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